REMARKS

By the present Amendment, claims 1, 8, and 9 have been amended, and claim 2 cancelled. Accordingly, claims 1 and 3-9 remain pending in the application. Claims 1, 4, 8, and 9 are independent.

In the Office Action of December 29, 2006, claims 1-3, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent No. JP 2001-186507 to Kazuo et al. ("Kazuo"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner's indication that claims 4-7 are allowed over the art of record, is noted with appreciation.

The Office Action alleges that Kazuo discloses a security camera system that comprises all of the features recited in the claimed invention. For example, the Office Action alleges that the security camera system of Kazuo includes an image pickup module that picks up an image and generates a video signal, and subsequently outputs the video signal. The Office Action further indicates that Kazuo includes a user recognition module, a processing module, and a display module. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As amended, independent claim 1 defines a security camera system that comprises:

> an image pickup module which picks up an image, generates a video signal, and outputs the video signal;
>
> a record module which records the video signal on a record medium;
>
> an image recognition module which detects a specific image from the video signal outputted by the image pickup module or the video signal read out from the record module;
>
> a user recognition module which recognizes a plurality of different users and identifies a user who is watching an image generated from the video signal and outputs user information

concerning said user who is watching said image, wherein said user can change depending on a situation;

a processing module which receives the video signal outputted by the image pickup module or the video signal read out from the record module, and processes a part of the received video signal corresponding to the image detected by the image recognition module according to the user information, and outputs the processed video signal;

a display module which displays an image generated by the processed video signal outputted by the processing module; and

a level control module which receives the user information, generates processing level information indicating level of the processing corresponding to the user information, and outputs the processing level information,

wherein the processing module carries out the processing so that a level of the image processing is changed between several different levels, for privacy protection, depending on the processing level information.

The security camera system of independent claim 1 includes an image pickup module, a record module, an image recognition module, a user recognition module, a processing module, a display module, and a level control module. The image pickup module obtains images, generates a video signal, and outputs the video signal. The record module also records the video signal on a recording medium. Specific images are detected by the image recognition module from either the video signal output by the image pickup module or from reading the video signal saved on the recording medium. The user recognition module recognizes a plurality of different users and identifies which user is watching the image being generated from the video signal. The user recognition module outputs user information that indicates who is currently watching the image. This is all based on the ability for different users to watch the images based on different situations and/or circumstances. The processing module receives the video signal and processes a part of the received video signal corresponding to the detected image based on the

user information output by the user recognition module. The processing module subsequently outputs the processed video signal. The display module displays an image that has been generated according to the video signal processed by the processing module. The level control unit receives the user information and generates a corresponding processing level. The processing level information is output, in part, so that the processing module can perform the requisite level of video signal processing. According to the security camera system of independent claim 1, the processing module performs the processing so that privacy protection can be maintained and appropriately changed to correspond to different levels, based on the specific user watching the image(s).

At least one benefit achieved by the security monitoring system of independent claim 1 is the ability to maintain the privacy of individuals whose images are being viewed by the security system, based on the user watching the video image and specific security situations. For example, under various circumstances, the system may be monitored by different persons, such as: an employee of a security agency, a temporary employee, a police officer, etc. The temporary employee can be an ordinary person with limited security authorization, and not allowed to view much of the video images to avoid invading the privacy of individuals who are not committing any suspicious/criminal activities. The temporary employee may therefore be limited with respect to the image information being displayed. The employee of the security agency may have authorization to view only a limited amount of images and/or activity. For example, this user could be given access to view minimal features of the image so that the privacy of the individuals being observed is still somewhat protected. On the other hand, the security system can be operated by, for example, a police officer, investigating certain criminal activities or

monitoring certain individual behaviors. In such circumstances, the monitoring system of the instant invention would allow a high quality video signal to be transmitted so that the police officer can obtain/view a clear image of the individual being observed. This particular benefit is accomplished by providing a user recognition module that is capable of identifying the user watching the image and setting an appropriate image processing level to control the quality of the image being displayed. Thus, individual privacy rights would be protected.

The Office Action alleges that Kazuo discloses all the features of the claimed invention. In particular, the Office Action alleges that Kazuo provides a user recognition module which recognizes a user viewing the image being generated and outputs information concerning the user. The Office Action directs attention to Fig. 1 and paragraph [006]. Kazuo's system, however, differs from that of the claimed invention. First, Kazuo does not appear to identify a plurality of different users who are capable of observing images from the monitoring system. Additionally, Kazuo does not appear to provide multiple levels of video processing based directly on identification of the different users. Kazuo appears to access the portrait rights protection section which allows various fields to be concealed, or simply allows the fields to be displayed. This particular arrangement clearly differs from that of the instant invention. More particularly, Kazuo fails to disclose features of independent claim 1 such as:

...

> a user recognition module which recognizes a plurality of different users and identifies a user who is watching an image generated from the video signal and outputs user information concerning said user who is watching said image, wherein said user can change depending on a situation;

...

a level control module which receives the user information, generates processing level information indicating level of the processing corresponding to the user information, and outputs the processing level information,

wherein the processing module carries out the processing so that a level of the image processing is changed between several different levels, for privacy protection, depending on the processing level information.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 is allowable over the art of record.

Claim 3 depends from independent claim 1, and is therefore believed allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1. In addition, this claim introduces novel elements that independently render it patentable over the art of record.

Independent claim 8 defines a controller that comprises:

a first input module to which a video signal generated and outputted by an image pickup module is inputted;

a record module which records the inputted video signal on a record medium;

an image recognition module which detects a specific image from the inputted video signal or the video signal read out from the record module;

a user recognition module which recognizes a plurality of different users and identifies a user who is watching an image generated from the video signal, and outputs user information concerning said user who is watching said image, wherein said user can change depending on a situation;

a second input module which receives user information outputted by said user recognition module;

a processing module which receives the inputted video signal or the video signal read out from the record module, processes part of the video signal corresponding to the image detected by the image recognition module in a way varying depending on the user information;

an output module which outputs video information processed by the processing module; and

a level control module which receives the user information, generates processing level information indicating level of the processing corresponding to the user information, and outputs the processing level information,

wherein the processing module carries out the processing so that a level of the image processing is changed between several different levels, for privacy protection, depending on the processing level information.

The controller of independent claim 8 includes a first input module, a record module, an image recognition module, a user recognition module, a second input module, a processing module, an output module, and a level control module. The user recognition module is capable of recognizing a plurality of different users and identifying which user who is currently watching the image being generated from the video signal. The user recognition module also outputs the user information. Further, the level control module receives the user information and generates processing level information that indicates the level of the processing to be performed based on the user information. The processing module subsequently carries out the processing so that the level of image processing performed is selectable between several different levels, depending on the processing information, in order to preserve privacy rights. As previously discussed with respect to independent claim 1, Kazuo does not appear to provide these particular features.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that independent claim 8 is allowable over the art of record.

Independent claim 9 defines a monitoring terminal for a security camera system that comprises:

a user recognition module which recognizes a plurality of different users and identifies a user who is watching the image displayed on the monitor, and outputs user information concerning said user who is watching said image, wherein said user can change depending on a situation;

a transmission module which transmits the user information to the controller;

a reception module which receives the processed video signal output from the controller which processes a specific part of the video signal outputted by the camera module so that a level of that image processing is changed between several different levels, for privacy protection, depending on the user information transmitted from the transmission module; and

an output module which outputs the received processed video signal to the monitor.

The monitoring terminal of independent claim 9 is designed for use with a security camera system that includes a camera module and a controller. The monitoring terminal includes a user recognition module capable of recognizing a number of different users and identifying the user watching the image being displayed. The user recognition module also outputs user information corresponding to the user who is watching the current image. A transmission module is provided for transmitting the user information to the controller. A reception module is used to receive the processed video signal from the controller after it has been subjected to the appropriate level of processing based on the user. An output module is then used to output the received video signal to the monitor. As previously discussed, Kazuo does not identify the user viewing the video signal and set different levels of processing based on the specific user viewing the video signal.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that independent claim 9 is allowable over the art of record.

For the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Therefore, the issuance of a Notice of Allowance is believed in order, and courteously solicited.

If the Examiner believes that there are any matters which can be resolved by way of either a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

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AUTHORIZATION

Applicants request any shortage or excess in fees in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, and for which no other form of payment is offered, be charged or credited to Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case: 500.42882X00).

Respectfully submitted,
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